



CPEC

ACT and SAT Review, 2009

**Director's
report**

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Staff from ACT and the College Board briefed CPEC staff last month on the 2009 ACT and SAT college admission tests. Both tests showed progress toward college readiness has been made over the past several years, although at a slow pace. Ethnic and gender achievement gaps in both tests still continue.

ACT

- A record 19% of high school graduates took the ACT this year in California. Average ACT scores are mostly unchanged from last year. Scores have been trending upward over the past few years in all subject areas.
- Among high school graduates in California who took the ACT, 29% met or exceeded ACT's benchmarks for college readiness in English, math, reading and science. This is a 1 percentage point increase from last year and has been on an upward trend over the past several years.
- Nationally, 23% of high school graduates met all four ACT college readiness benchmarks, up slightly from the year before.
- ACT's findings show that 71% of California graduates lack the skills needed to get a "C" in first-year college courses, particularly math and science.

SAT

- This year 207,301 of California's graduating high school class took the SAT. They averaged 500 on critical reading, 513 in math and 498 in writing. The national average was 501 in critical reading, 515 in math, and 493 in writing.
- Ethnic and gender gaps widened slightly. Males scored higher on math with an average of 536, compared to 495 for females. Males scored slightly higher in critical reading and females averaged higher scores in writing.
- Whites had the highest combined average at 1631, followed by Asian and Pacific Islanders at 1602, Mexican Americans at 1343, and African Americans at 1303.
- Test-taking among some ethnic groups rose. Mexican-American participation increased by 11%, Asians and Pacific Islanders by 1.7%, and African Americans by 1.5%.